

WINTER SIDEWALKS



A Reluctant Guide's Guide to Them

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WHEN INFRASTRUCTURE FAILS US

What happens when people cannot rely on being able to safely walk and use wheelchairs to get places?

- People get injured slipping/falling, lose time and income, rack up medical bills. Sometimes they don't get better.
- People will use the street, facing aggression and harassment from drivers and police
- People will leave home less, become isolated, suffer physical and mental health declines
- People die.

**We are less when we are
without each other**



SHIFT PERSPECTIVE

How can we think about and assess sidewalk conditions with a full range of our neighbors' needs in mind?



EXPERIENCES AS WE AGE

- Risk of falling
- Feel cold more easily
- Need to rest/readjust
- Need shelter en route
- Trips take longer



EXPERIENCES USING A WHEELCHAIR

- Need consistent unobstructed width
- Sand-like snow conditions make movement difficult/impossible
- Ramp access must be clear
- Battery life
- Space needed to make turns
- Bumpy textures can cause pain



OTHER MOBILITY CONCERNS

- Is the surface lit to see ice/etc?
- Are there windrows blocking ramps?
- Can I tell what I'm stepping into? Can I risk it?
- If I can enter this stretch of sidewalk, will I be able to exit at the end of the block? Will I have to turn back?
- What is the slope?
- Can my shoes/boots/wheelchair handle this? What happens if it's too deep for them/it?
- Will it be wide enough? What if someone is coming the other direction?



HOW CAN PEOPLE BUILD WINTER EMPATHY?

Pay attention to how walking shifts when we:

- Pull a cart, push a stroller, bring a wagon.
- Are underdressed for the temperatures
- Are wearing dress shoes, mesh tennis shoes, heels
- Push what we do to the far edges of your comfort level--groceries we can barely manage, for example. In sleeting weather. Without enough time.



OUR PHYSICAL CONTEXT

CLIMATE

We're a mid-continental city at the 45 parallel. We average 45" of snow, with 1+" on the ground for 100 days of the years. That's months of accumulation of snow. Plus we have temperatures that dip low enough to render salt useless.

CLIMATE BREAKDOWN

Winters are warming fast, precipitation (snow/rain/sleet) events are increasingly intense. We expect to experience more freeze/thaw cycling where in the past we've had temperature reliably below freezing (i.e. snow is no longer a stable-state from Dec-March for us).

WHAT'RE WE DEALING WITH?

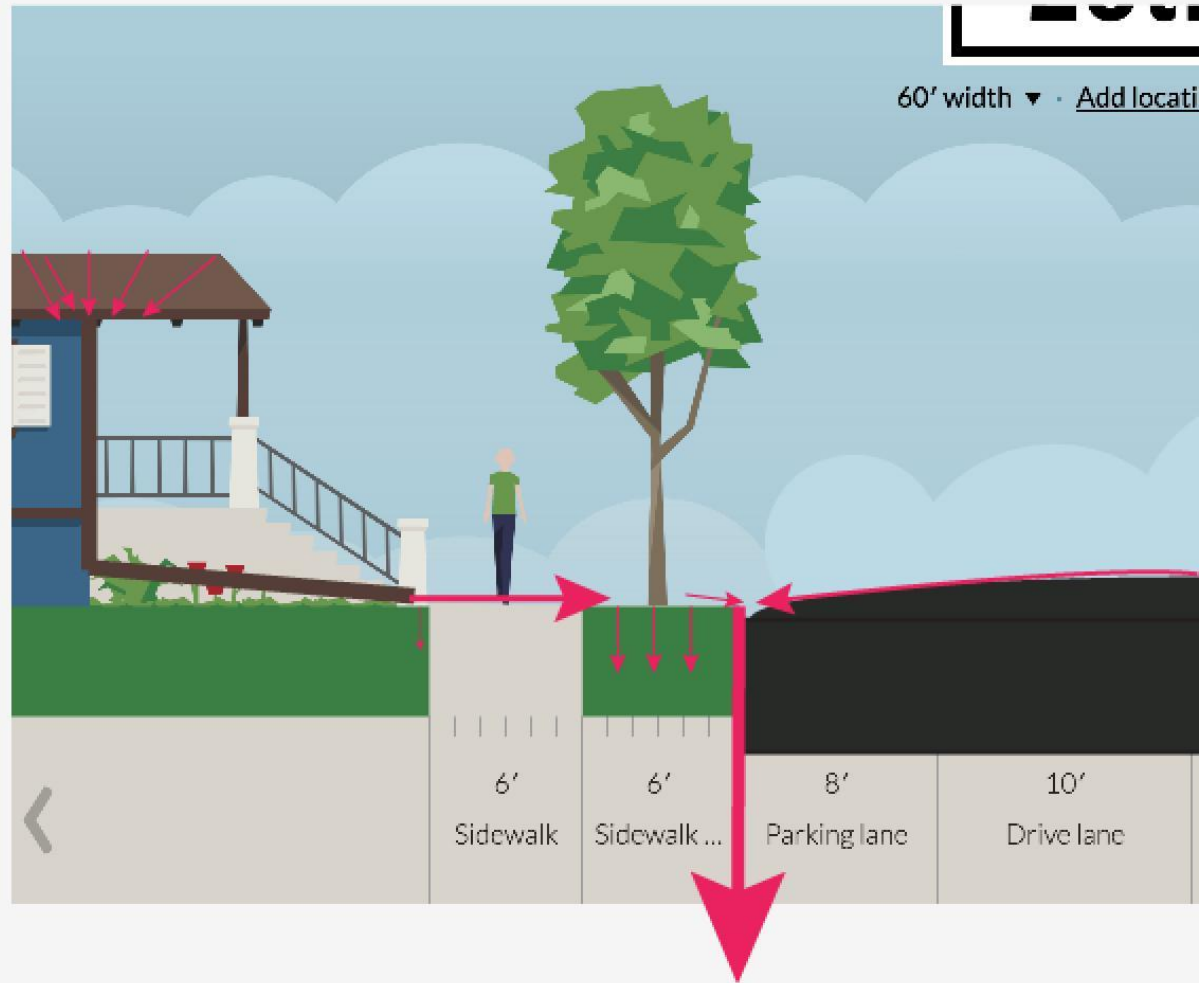
What are the chronic offenders causing problems for people just trying to get around walking and using wheelchairs?

ENGINEERING/REGULATION OF SIDEWALKS: AKA drainage: ice, puddles, freeze-thaw, location of gutters + storm drains + curb ramps, policies requiring drainage across sidewalks

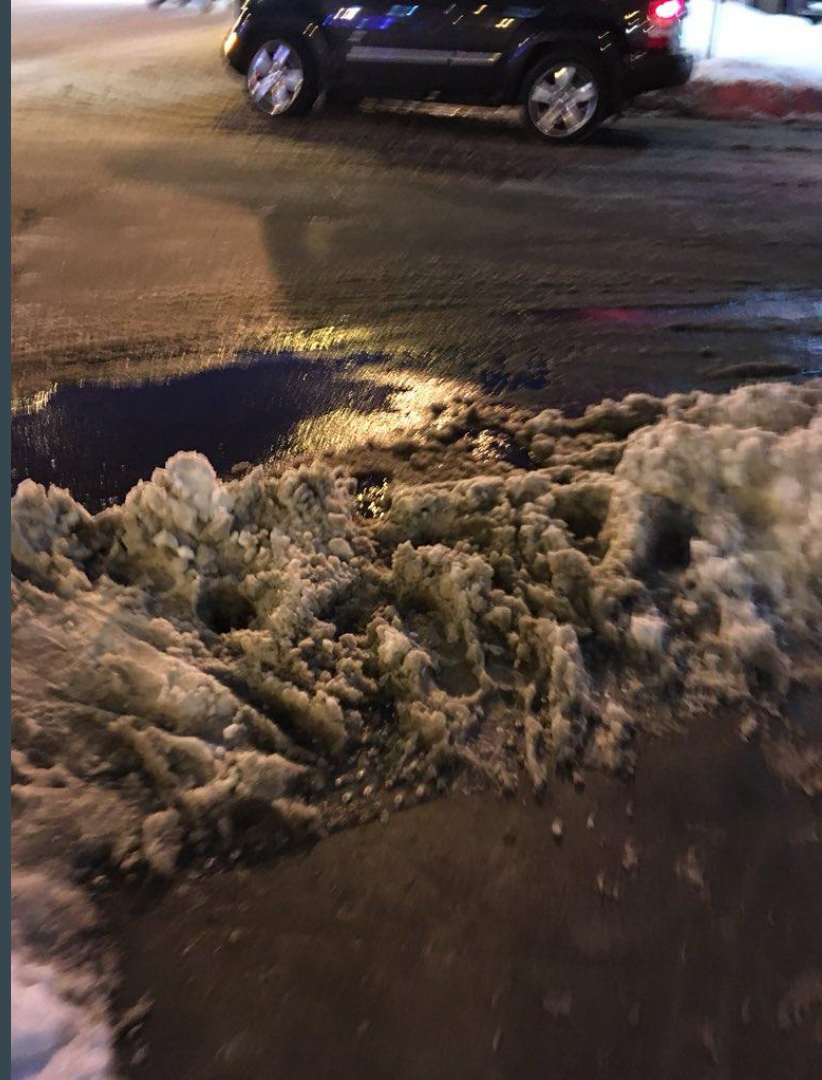
CARS: curb cut slopes, repeat re-deposits of slushy-snow + ice chunks, parking lot drainage

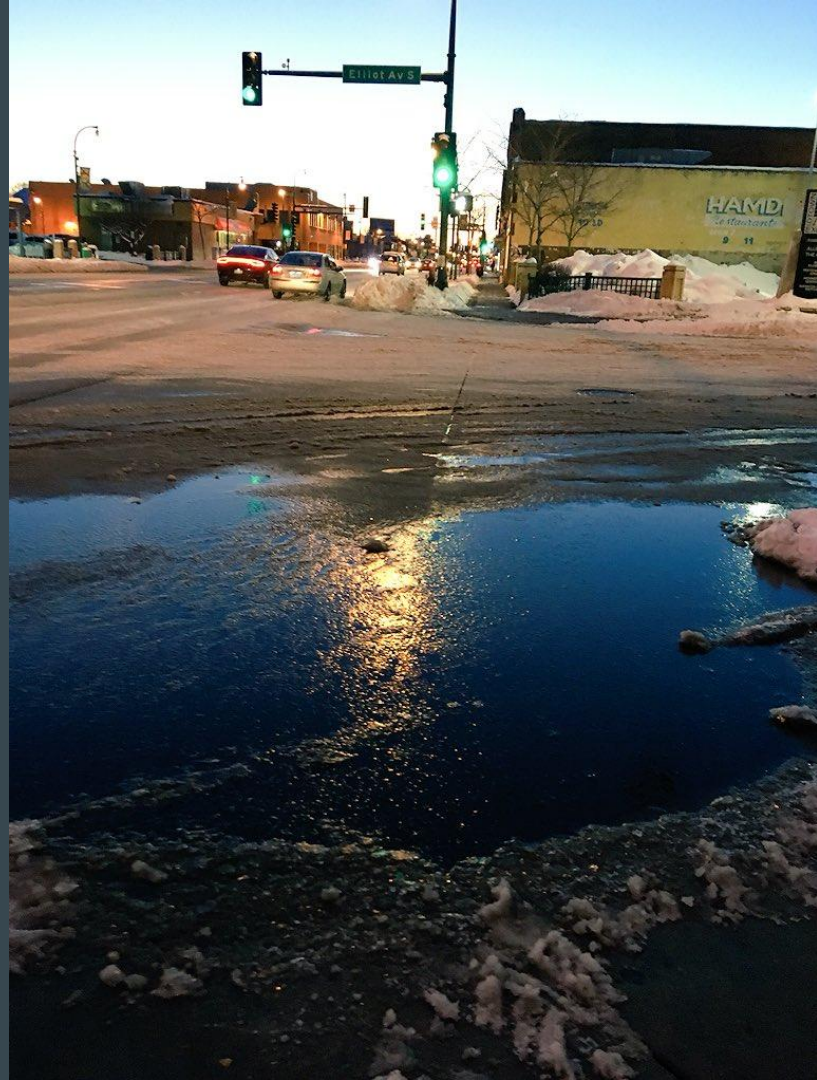
THE CITY'S (CHOICES IN) MAINTENANCE: windrows from plows, chunks pushed onto sidewalk, completely inaccessible actuated/APS buttons, delayed/insufficient corner clearing, blocked storm drains,

DRAINAGE



STORM DRAINS AND CURB RAMPS TOGETHER



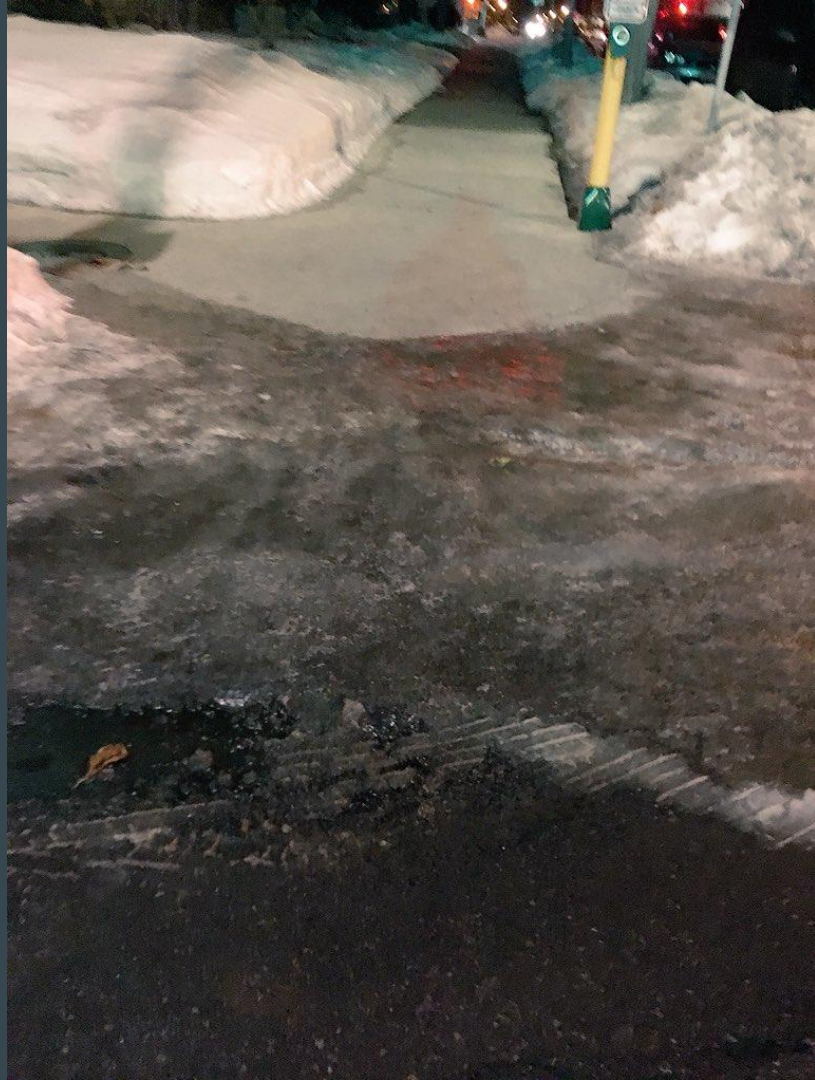


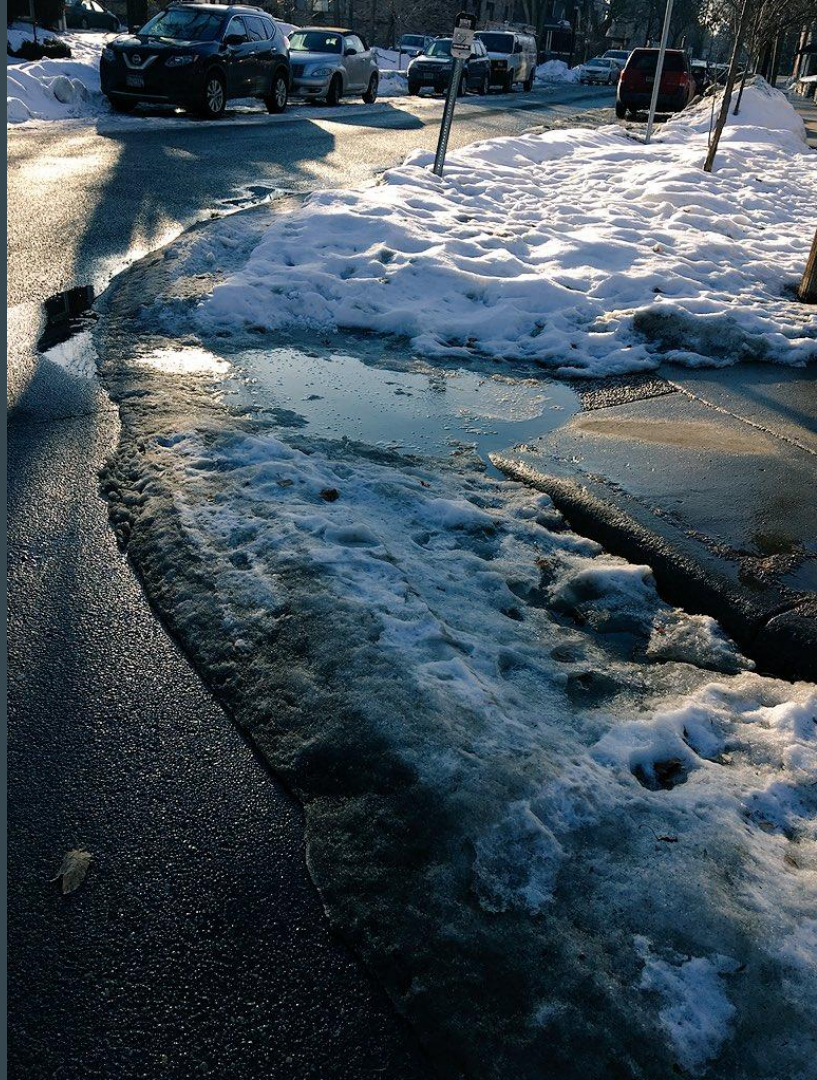
























WHAT CARS DO





PARKING LOTS
PRIORTIZED OVER
PEOPLE



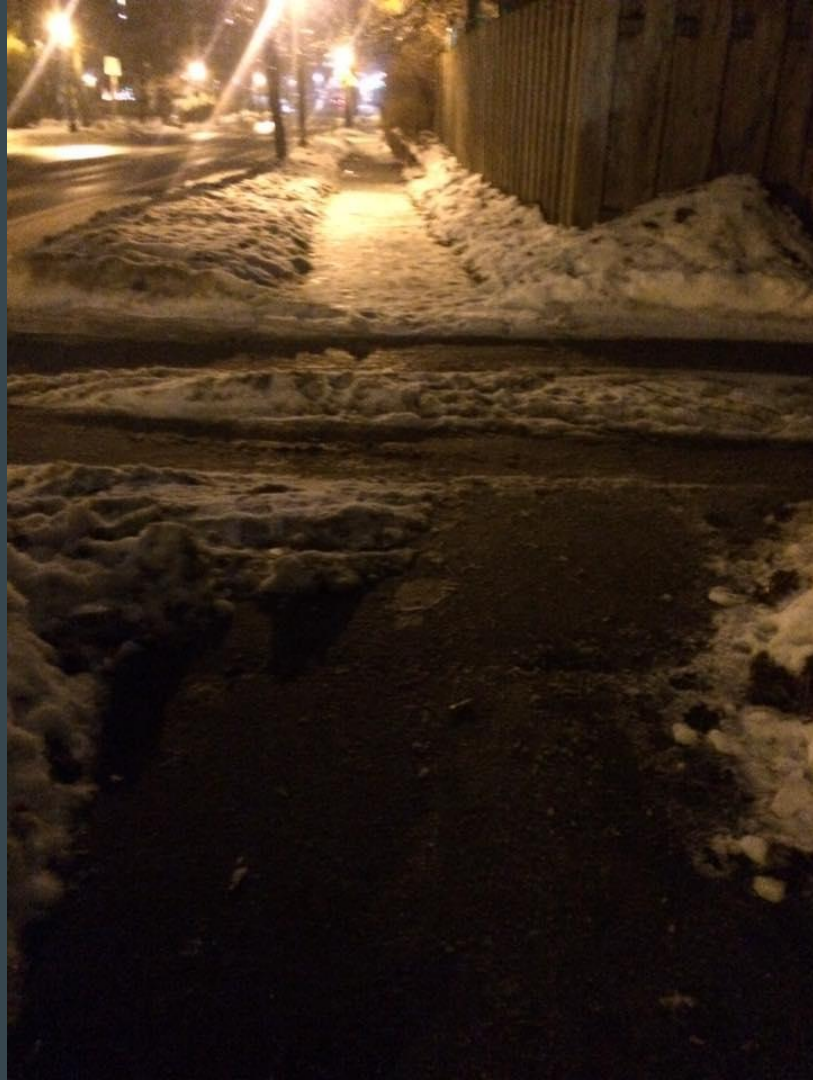
CAR “STUFF”

















THE CITY PILES ON



WINDROWS

The often compacted snow/ice berms left by plows clearing space for cars in alleys, streets, and parking lots









AND THE COUNTY





BUILDINGS DRAIN OVER SIDEWALKS EVEN IN NEWLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDINGS



PLOWING STREET ONTO SIDEWALK



CORNER CLEARING PROGRAM





JUST ADD SALT?













DON'T EVEN TRY?





WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU WAIT









ACTUATED BUTTONS







